

The Gleaner

2004-2005





Photo by Meredith Cole

The Gleaner

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THE TICKING OF GUILT

In a class of real estate fundamentals that my wife and I took, there was taught the concept of "highest and best use of " a piece of property. That dictated the fate of much local real estate, whether it was to be left as raw, as housing, as commercial, or as agriculture.

In a way the highest and best use of "time" in the Ziemer household that spawned me held a similar value dictated largely by Dad and his large railroad pocket watch. His famous words to us at the end of many meals was, "Well, Boys, let's go to work." And off to tractors, balers, combines, strawberry fields, forests, and livestock we went. He was a Cancer--a water sign, and some of us boys and Mom were Leos, or fire signs. Imagine the mixture! But we were, and are still, workaholics.

As we got older, Dad used to say, supported by Mom, I'm convinced, "If you boys stick around the farm (when the trend was to leave the farm and find work in a factory or join the military) and help 'the old man,' I'll see to it that you get a college education." Coming from those lips--a seventh-grade achiever--made them seem beyond our reach. But Mom's own college education and career as an educator backed this value in her quiet way. On rare occasions he even kept us out of school to do field work. You can only guess the dismay we felt as our bus mates rode by our farm with smiles on their faces, while we had hoes in our hands. My therapist drives a Jaguar by now.

Dad disliked lazy people--"lazy bastard" being one of his oft-used expressions. He also imparted, "Any man who'll lie to you will steal from you." Being lazy was equivalent to stealing time away from someone else--family chores or employer. Dad's watch kept the time for us to start and stop work in the fields. "Well Boys, it's time to go to dinner" (noon meal) or "It's time to quit and go to supper," or "It's time study or go to bed." "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

The guilt trip I would experience--long before guilt-free potato chips arrived--about my use of time in college or in later life never dawned on me then. If I'm non-productive, I may as well be in jail for theft of service.

And so with the homespun commandments of Dad Ziemer, we matured, and Richard, Rodney, Robert, and David Ziemer earned university educations. Our parents put no restrictions on where we could attend college--we could even leave the state of Oregon to do so. And so, off to universities went four young workaholic teenagers: known in the dining hall as waiters, in the library as reference workers for other students doing research, in the faculty wing as teachers' proofreaders and paper graders, on campus security working the night watch rounds, on campus maintenance keeping the campus up and running, or tutoring and reading to sight-impaired students.

We were in school plays and musical groups but reflected not on the value of leisure to rebuild ourselves other than what we acquired through sleep and rest. I remember wanting to study voice lessons with a retired opera singer in. Dad said I could, but I'd have to pay for them

myself; training the voice didn't hold a candle to playing a guitar or another "real" musical instrument. Moreover, the guitar-toting troubadour sweeping through Sandy selling acoustic and electric guitars with twenty lessons convinced Dad that boys our age should be playing Hawaiian or Spanish guitars. Once during the local Sandy Strawberry Festival Dad sufficiently convinced the manager of a traveling amusement group that my brother and I could provide excellent accompaniment to his merry-go-round. Rodney and I sat on chairs surrounded by sawdust and swirling horses and played electric steel Hawaiian guitars while people threw in money years before Elvis Presley became famous. Promoter Dad was pleased.

But picking berries on Alma Frances Fields' farm garnered me cash to use for summer afternoon lessons for what I considered my instrument—my 14-year old voice. What all that early work also generated was a savings for me of \$456.00 put away in the Clackamas County Bank to pay my tuition. The first semester's university tuition was exactly \$456.00, so I was on my way financing my own education. Dad and Mom's financial aid kicked in as a supplement without our knowledge of Perkins or Stafford loans or grants. I busied myself with academics and campus work. By spring I wanted to sing in the opera chorus for a large-scale production of "Faust." Don't remember if I asked permission or not. Having been nicknamed "Trenchie" in high school and winning the Prix d'Honneur came in handy for coaching the rest of the opera chorus in their lines. But rehearsals and performances ate into my time. How would I cope with the guilt of being recreational and not productive?

Later with three sons in college, Dad used to say, "We borrowed \$12,000.00 to put you kids through college." I reminded him of that oft-repeated statement years later when he visited us in Pennsylvania, and I did get out my checkbook, asking, "How many zeros should I put after this number to pay you back part or all of that \$12,000?"

"Put away your checkbook; I don't want your money," came the response from a fatherly heart. With that he pulled out his wallet and said, "Mom and I sold some land and we're giving each of you boys some of the money. All of you helped clear the land." In my living room I saw \$100- and \$50-dollar bills peel out of his hand with a smile. Was my dad learning to enjoy the fruits of his labor without laboring any more? Was he learning to play? To relax? I was astounded but graciously accepted the \$800.00.

"Where did you keep this money when you traveled from Oregon to Pennsylvania?" I asked.

"In a tin can under the front seat of the Ford," Dad said.

We four Ziemer boys knew our dad invented the concept "work." It was a relief to see some of it now tempered with generosity. Taking him grocery shopping was rewarding. He could always pull money out of his pocket to pay a bill faster than any of us married sons could. "Your money is no good," he'd say. "Mine is." Must close; it's time for class, or did someone say "Recess"?

Dr. Richard C. Ziemer

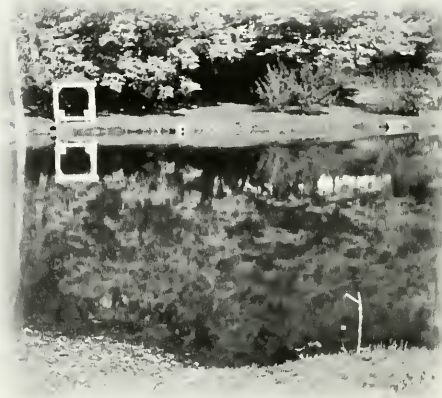


Photo by Renée McManus

THE BIRDCAGE

It's Sat AM in Allman Hall
 And Aggies sit for their exam final
 In History and Parasitology,
 But it could just as easily be
 Poly Sci or Sociology.

Watch these Aggies as they write,
 Concentrating with all their might,
 Trying to capture words on a page
 'Ere they're a moment's thought of age!

Of all these students I help proctor
 A few revere me as "Doctors"
 O'er forty students here I know
 On whom this College will bestow

A diploma for courses
 Which they've had on hogs or horses,
 Cows or bees, bio or cheese,
 Bus ad, agronomy, chem, or trees.

A few seem so well relaxed
 You'd think they never had the academic boom
 Lower'd on their poles
 From birth to date.

Still others struggle to get their best
 In that exam book for the test
 Which holds them in such rapt attention
 That they writhe, oblivious to all distractions.

Though they're not droffing Congressional Records,
 Their pencils push with one accorde.

Guess I got jealous of their composin'
 And to keep myself from dozin'
 Grabbed my pen to write
 And share a modicum of their plight.

REFLECTIONS, MAY 13, 1973
 Dr. Richard C. Ziemer, Professor
 Chairman of Liberal Arts

Spring Fashions

*In the blossoming apple tree
A perky goldfinch
Warbles sweetly and clearly:
Decked in a bright yellow raincoat,
He does not mind
The gentle April showers!*
--Dr. Karen Schramm

Photo by Renee McManus

Setting a Course For Heaven

*A cloud upon the freshening wind
With full sails billowing brightly
Clips along a celestial sea
Of smooth sapphire blue.*

--Dr Karen Schramm

Photo by Karen Schramm

The Land

This crisp fall of two thousand four,
looking out from the Hort Building second floor
Where Dave first entered class with a humorous roar
(from the iron balcony through the trees

I spy a vista that catches my eye)

Across SEPTA's path the pastoral fall night is aglow
with the bright lights as beacons from the condos by the row
Row after row hitherto animals, pasture, peaches and corn
now with asphalt and vinyl that land is adorned.

Good neighbors are they?

"You must not spray!"

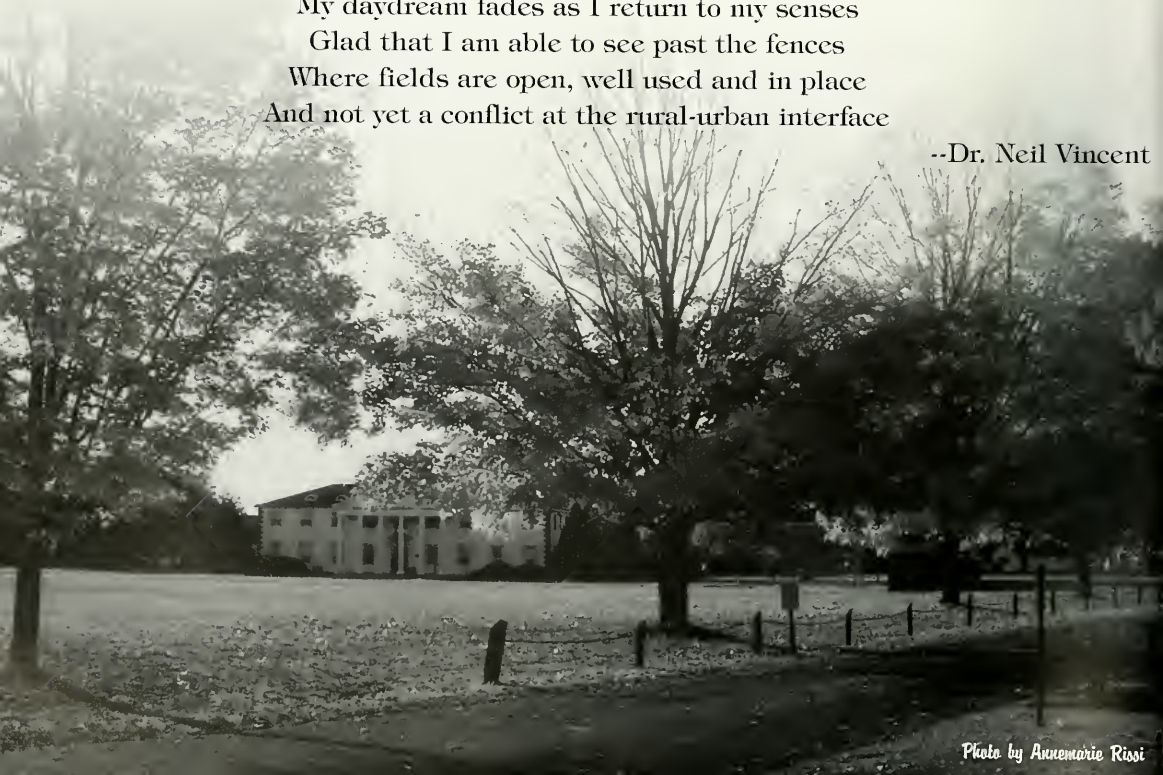
Good neighbors are they?

"Hey, the awful smell by the way!"

Not to lament, there is still a view
Unfortunately it arises from them to you
There's no space to wander
or private places to ponder

To ramble around with students and do our teaching
To stand with nature and do our preaching
My daydream fades as I return to my senses
Glad that I am able to see past the fences
Where fields are open, well used and in place
And not yet a conflict at the rural-urban interface

--Dr. Neil Vincent



Annemarie Rissi

Saying Goodbye is So Hard to Do

*How can you say goodbye
It's so hard to do just that
Say goodbye to a love
Say goodbye to a best friend
Say goodbye to a confidant
Say goodbye to a precious soul*

*I asked myself time and again
Why you must go away
Leave me here in this place
Thinking of you always
All alone without you
Oh how much I miss, miss you*

*You were always there when I needed you
Through all the times I needed you
Someone who would never talk back
Comforted me without words
All alone without you
Oh how much I miss, miss you*

*You were one in a million
Unique yes indeed
You stayed by my side always
You never judged me even once
All alone without you
Oh how much I miss, miss you*

*It's going to be lonely, here by myself
But I must not forget all the good times
All the fun we had
The many happy memories
And how good you were to me
That is why I know you will always be close to
my heart*

*So goodbye, my friend
But just for now
For I will see you again in heaven
And above all else
I know you will always be in my heart
Forever and until the end*



RWAN M. FARIAN

A Pirate's Story

The storm now rolling in,
We'll wait no longer, we three, we,
And boldly lay ourselves
Before the mercy of the sea.

How far to go, an empty quest,
We'll know when we arrive.
Then slay, will we, and drink and loot,
And maybe leave alive.

For now, the sea, we concentrate,
Holding the ship afloat.
Hull piercing waves like knives through men,
Or sacrificial goat.

Our golden destination lies
In treasure buried deep.
Of striking rich, a just reward,
For weeks of lacking sleep.

Finally, a sight to behold,
Land cresting distant waves,
Natives seen will soon lay rest
In future native graves.

Onward now, to barren shore,
We'll drink up, we three, we,
To celebrate our conquering
The mercy of the sea.

Now lay down the wooden ramp,
Knives drawn with guns at hand,
We make our way by treasure map
Across the island land.

Afar the rising smoke,
Beginning signal of a quest,
To overtake and wage war
With native tribal quest.

Ran we quickly toward the fire,
While islanders lay wait.
Ambush found left double down,
Danger seen too late.

We three pirates now to one,
I bailed to safer ground,
And off to sea, the wounded ship,
A second journey bound.

Though not to land this time around,
I voyage just to sea,
And throw my body overboard,
If you will, a mutiny.

For one life lost is blamed on luck,
But two is on the third,
Now off I go, to make us whole,
My voice again be heard.

Fear not, fellow pirates,
We'll stay together, we three, we,
As we drift atop the surface
At the mercy of the sea.

Anonymous Pisces

End of Days

*My heart is numb, it's no wonder why
Without these pills to slash my pain
I would take my own soul and wither and die.
I cannot feel the stinging wasp on my flesh,
I cannot feel the surrogated knife slip into my back,
I am all so happy and giddy
My mind isn't right, but it wasn't always this way.*

*This is what happens when others "Lie."
The effect of the ripple rolling out into the wave.
This is my end of days.
I watch them go with a smile, one by one, slow but sure.
Saw them vanished right under the sun,
Calling out empty promises,
Silenced and bare.
I watched them go with a smirk and a friendly wave.
Good-bye! I scream, Hello endless days.*

*After a handful of them, your heart gets cold.
After a mouthful, it now turns to stone.
Of course it's not theirs, it's mine alone.
I take all the blame for this rock that's breaking my
frame.
But if they didn't all lie, every which one.
If they didn't promise me lies,
My spirit would have shone and survived.
I would be able to feel, what's going on inside...*

For the little People

*To scale-the highest mountain,
To swim the widest sea,
These things great men have done
But this is not for me.*

*To be a hero of the world,
To set a nation straight,
These things great men have done
But this is not my fate.*

*To lead a simple, Godly life
And love all things I see,
This is just for little men -
Like you and you and me.*

-Cheryl Munizza



YOUTH CRIES OUT

Alone I stand
To face the world,
A flag flies over my unfurled.

Alone I stand
To voice my plea
For human rights and liberty.

Alone I stand
And see the tears
Fall from men not young in years.

Alone I stand
And see the crowds
Walk the streets with furoughed brows.

Alone I stand
To face the world,
A flag flies over me unfurled.

Alone I stand
To watch the sky,
I see our flag and wonder-why?

Alone am I
With Him at hand
And now alone no more I stand.

I have not much strength
And little skill,
But with my faith
And God's great will

The world a better place will be
For human rights and liberty.

-Cheryl Munizza

Lost Vision

My friends see the world in a cloud of darkness.

Political injustice over men towers.

But had I one moment to see,

In my sight would be the sweet spring flowers.

My friends see the world in a cloud of darkness.

The cord of trust between men undone.

But had I one moment to see,

In my sight would be the glowing morning sun.

My friends see the world in a cloud of darkness.

No discussions -- instead, shameful words fly.

But had I one moment to see,

In my sight would be the velvet-evening sky.

My friends see the world in a cloud of darkness.

They cry, "Where is our wealth from this fertile sod?"

But had I one moment to see,

I'd close my eyes and thank God.

-Cheryl Munizza

Housenlives & Husbands

A hundred years have aged my heart
But by the calendar
Only 6 weeks.

Where is the sun
I used to see every day?
Why are the seasons blurry
That once were clear?

Housenlfe, how can you complain
Of 3 meals a day,
Shoes out of place,
Or dispan hands,
When I wait
Eagerly
To hear his voice call my name?

As he fights dirt
And heat on foreign soil,
I am here
Alone -
Envious of you
Who complain of husbands.

-Cheryl Munizza



BEHOLD THE HUSH OF LIFE

Behold the hush of life
Where feet tread noiselessly through empty dreams;
Those dreams that once connected two lonely hearts,
Now crushed under the burden of strife.

Where hands grope out for a slender bit of hope
But all they find are ugly names
Forcing them back to the inner shell.
Last ray of hope gone.

Where scream of the poor are muffled in the ooze of luxury
And the barrier between people grows
With every brick of dishonestly laid.

The hush of life is not death
But the truth realism of living.
A life smothered over by well done
Verses of goody-goody men.

Life is not what you see day by day,
But the silent please of hope, suffering, and need
From within a mess of bony structure.

Behold the hush of life
Where feet tread noiselessly through empty dreams.
-Cheryl Munizza





Photo By C. Ochadlick

Every Day

Of I could wake each morning
to the sound of your soft voice,
There's nothing more I'd ask for,
You'd be my only choice.

Of I could start each day
with a kiss from your sweet lips,
I'd spend the whole day yearning
for one more simple kiss

Of I could spend each afternoon
on a blanket in the park
I would curl up in your arms
and stay there till it's dark.

Of I could know each evening
that you'd be coming home to me,
I'd have dinner there for you,
You're the only one I'd see.

Of I could fall asleep each night
lying next to you,
there's nowhere else I'd rather be
and you'd know it was true.

Of every dream I ever have
is the same as this one here
There's nothing that would change my mind
My feelings are very clear

-Crystal Craig

-July, 2004



Crystal Craig

Dreaming

*At night I lie awake
With you on my mind,
I toss and I turn
as I again check the time.
The last words you said to me
lingering in my ears,
I repeat them continuously
and my eyes swell with tears.
I'm lying here lonely
wishing for you,
But you're far away
wanting me too.
The idea of me seeing you
anytime soon
comes to my mind
when I'm all alone.
What would it be like
to see you again?
I'd fall into your arms
and breathe you all in.
I'd savor each moment
having you by my side,
I'd give you my heart
and take yours with pride.
What am I doing?
I'm dreaming at last,
seems that while thinking
I fell asleep fast.*



Jennifer Lowry
freshman

"Pheonix"





MODEL STUDENTS

It was the start of the semester and I was teaching a class on investment theory. I teach at a small liberal arts college. To get some class discussion going, I asked the class if anyone owned stock in a publicly traded corporation. Sharon raised her hand; she was the only student in the class to do so.

Most of the students I see in my classes do not own stock. They don't have any extra money to invest. Many will be \$20,000 to \$50,000 in debt with student loans by the time they graduate. But, occasionally I have a student with assets.

I asked Sharon if she would mind telling the class what companies she had investments in. Sharon didn't mind at all. She owned stock in one company: Limited Brands. I asked her how she had come to own this stock. I was expecting to hear that she had been given the stock as a gift or that she had inherited it. But, Sharon had earned it. She said she got it as part of her compensation in her job. Sharon explained that she had done an internship and some modeling for Victoria's Secret. They are a division of Limited Brands.

I noticed that many of the guys in the class who had been staring at their desks in a trance were suddenly conscious again. The words "Victoria's Secret" had rekindled their interest in investing. I give Limited Brands credit. You just don't get that level of student interest with Exxon Mobile.

Sharon had already made an impression on me before she had revealed her portfolio. In earlier classes, she had received an "A" from me. In this class, she had actually raised her hand and asked questions. She came to class early and a few times I caught her reading the textbook. This behavior in a student usually engenders a positive impression, but now I looked at her again in light of her employment history.

Sharon was tall, thin and pretty, but at 8:30 AM dressed in a sweatshirt, blue jeans, and a baseball cap she wasn't more attractive than three or four other girls in the class. On her way out after class, two male students elbowed for position to walk out with her. They probably wanted to discuss investment strategy with her.

That semester, investing class was at 8:30 AM on the top floor of a hundred-year-old building. Railroad tracks run about 25 feet from the structure. The building is used for a combination of things. The first floor is really a storage area with garage doors at either end so that you can drive a vehicle completely through it. Above this are science labs and offices. On the third floor, at the top of a long and narrow staircase are two classrooms. My class was in one of these rooms. The rooms are cold in the winter and hot at all other times. There is a tunnel (one car wide) under the railroad tracks right under the window of the classroom. Cars frequently honk their horns before going through the tunnel so they don't crash into someone coming the other way. Commuter trains rattle by every 45 minutes. I like teaching in these rooms, because it makes education more of a challenge. Anyone can teach in a perfect setting with modern soundproof classrooms and a temperate climate. It takes an especially fine professor to edify students in an environment that mimics a train station waiting room on the planet Mercury.

I always arrived for class about fifteen minutes early to set up my materials and to make sure the computer was working. That semester when I would get there in the morning, Sharon would usually be the only student already in a seat. She would sit and read her textbook and ask an occasional question. I had taught her in two previous classes and knew she was very close to her mother so she would give me some family news once in a while. I had once helped her understand an early retirement offer her mother had received by explaining the options and giving her some ways to evaluate the alternatives. The beauty of a small college is the chance to have a rapport with the students who want one.

One morning towards the end of the term, I arrived in class to find Sharon at her desk. However, this time she was not reading her text. She was hard at work with three stacks in front of her. She had a stack of business letters, a pile of 8x10 photographs, and a stack of large envelopes. She was obviously working on a large mailing. I walked over to her, but I stopped short when I could see the photos. The photos were of a girl in her underwear.

Now, I probably shouldn't have been startled. It seems obvious now. An underwear model sending out letters to get modeling jobs would obviously send out pictures of themselves in their underwear. I must have had a look of shock on my face because Sharon started to giggle. She took a picture, wrote something on it, and handed it to me. She said, "I want you to have this, Professor." The picture was of Sharon all right. She was in full make-up, with perfect hair, and clothed in a black negligee. She had written, "To my favorite professor. You taught me so much. Love, Sharon."

The last time I probably blushed so much was in sixth grade when I was the first one out in the school spelling bee. I think I missed the word "dilemma." I mumbled thank you and retreated to the front of the room where I deposited the picture in a folder. At the end of class, I went back to my office. After stalling as long as I could with e-mail and phone messages, I opened the folder slightly and peeked at the picture. She was as beautiful as any model I'd ever seen in a picture, but I felt very uneasy looking at her. A definite problem came to mind: what to do with the picture. Taking it home was not an option. Displaying it in the office would not be appropriate and would bring way too much attention. I hid the photo in my desk.

That night, a thought hit me. Let's say I was to die suddenly and my wife goes through my office stuff and finds the photo hidden away. I could picture it. She looks at a photo of an almost naked girl thanking me for all I had taught her. There goes the old eulogy. The next morning, I took out the picture, ripped it in four pieces and threw it away.

And then there was Tony. He was from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He lived there as an only child with his mother and father. The family had a farm where they raised Christmas trees, pumpkins and plants for landscaping. I learned about all this when Tony came in to talk to me about his grade in Finance. He was not doing well; he had a 62% average at the mid-term.

Tony had attended all the classes. He was physically there in the classroom. But he was always tired and seemed to have trouble staying focused. When I asked him about it, he told me about his work schedule. Here in town, he worked at a local convenience store. He opened it up at 5:30 AM and left in time to make the 9:55 AM class. He worked another four hours in the afternoon. On weekends, he would drive home to help his parents with the business. He didn't have much time to do his schoolwork.

One weekend, Tony stayed at school. He asked for help with his Finance. We worked on a Sunday morning from 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The effort was there. The desire to learn was there. The math skills were not there. I would put a problem on the board and he would stare at it as if waiting for a secret message to suddenly reveal itself. When no revelation was forthcoming, he would write a couple of random numbers down on his paper and scratch his head as he stared at the numbers. He seemed capable of spending hours just looking at a problem.

After what seemed to me to be an extraordinary amount of time, I would explain the essence of the problem and suggest a strategy to solve it. He would make another start, perhaps write down another couple of numbers, and then go back into the staring mode. Finally, I would go through the problem step by step. I asked him at each stage if he understood. Invariably, he would say he did understand. However, if I gave him a similar new problem (perhaps with a slight twist) he went back to staring. Tony said that he found many problems, like those dealing with the value of a lottery prize or a change in the level of inflation, difficult to relate to in his own life.

Over the rest of the term, he came by for extra help and occasionally seemed to be making progress. On his last test he scored a 73%, which was his high grade for the semester. When a student puts in that type of effort, I find myself starting to root for them on the tests. On the Finance final, I put in a question that I thought Tony might feel comfortable working. It went something like this:

A farmer has to make a choice about what to grow on a new piece of ground that he has just cleared. He is considering one of two options. Option one is to plant Christmas trees. If the farmer takes this option, he will be able to harvest 1000 trees at the end of six years, all of which he will be able to sell for \$55 per

tree. The second option is to plant pumpkins. He believes he will average 30,000 pounds of pumpkins EACH OF THE NEXT SIX YEARS and he will be able to sell them for \$30 per pound. Assume each choice has the same annual labor cost and each option is equally risky. Money is worth 7% to the farmer (opportunity cost). Assume all income comes at the end of each year. Which option gives the farmer the highest pre-tax Present Value?

What I was hoping to see from the students was an answer that used two timelines: one with a lump sum six years out and the other a six-year annuity. Discounting at 7%, you could compare the two cash flows and pick the one that gives you the most value. And of the sixty students who took the exam, about two-thirds made a good effort towards coming up with the answer. Tony was not one of them.

I looked at his paper. He had made a couple fittful starts. The number six was written a couple of times as well as seven percent. He had started to multiply 1000 and \$55, but had stopped short of an answer. He had tried a diagram with Christmas trees on one side and pumpkins on the other, but there were no real calculations. At the bottom of the page there was just this note:

"If you asked me how far apart to plant the trees or the pumpkins, I could tell you. If you asked me how much fertilizer to give them and when to give it, I could tell you. If you told me how much rain we had and what the temperature did, I could tell you how many trees or pumpkins we would probably get. But if I told my father we had to do a calculation like this to decide which one to plant, he'd kick me."

At graduation, Tony sought me out. He had passed the course, but he had received the lowest grade in the class. He thanked me for helping him and said he would try to use what he had learned. He said he thought forcing himself to try to be better in Finance could only help him later in life when he came to other challenges.

I find it easy to feel a little paternal about many of the students I've worked with at my school. It is a small school with classes that are often small. Some students you get to know pretty well. You see them turn from high school children into functioning adults. You see romantic relationships begin in class as two students start to sit closer and closer to each other and walk around campus holding hands. You see some relationships deteriorate as these same students suddenly sit at opposite ends of the classroom. Some students come to your office hoping you can help them find a job. Some come to explain why they haven't been in class and break down when they tell you their mother has been diagnosed with breast cancer or a grandparent has died.

Yes, sometimes you almost feel like a parent. I think that is the main reason I felt so uncomfortable looking at the picture of Sharon. I love my own daughter and I think she is attractive, but the last thing I would want is a picture of her in her underwear. But, the seemingly parental ties with students are an illusion. Teachers are not the parents of their students. I can tell this because they never send me a card for my birthday. I don't get ties from them at Christmas. They hardly ever ask me for money.

A parent's bond to its child is stronger than the bond from child to parent. Likewise, the teacher's bond to the student is stronger. Sharon and Tony graduated a couple of years ago; I haven't heard from either of them since Commencement. Students graduate and their memories of school are overwhelmed by life. But, I think of them. I wonder if things are working out well. I wonder if they learned anything useful from me. I particularly remember the special students. I'm not quite sure what makes them special. Some are model students and some are clearly not. We have a place in their lives for four or five years and then they are gone and new, younger versions appear to take their place.

My wife and I have tried to spend as much time as possible with our children as they grow up. I feel that because of this effort our kids will have a piece of us with them throughout their lives. I think there is a similar effect with the students in my classes. Whether the students know it or not, they take a small piece of me with them when they go.



Dr. Karen Schramm

Evenings In the Blue Ridge

Silv'ry doves course by
On their whistle-winged flight
To the distant white-gold horizon.

The pale blue evening sky
Is softly smudged with salmon-hued clouds.

The glowing yolk of sun
Sinks below rich lavender sky
To disappear
Behind dusky blue mountains.

A shy moon peeps softly
Through the cloud-quilted night sky.

Upon the ebony cloth of night,
Distant towns twinkle with light,
Like fallen stars
Liberally sprinkled
On the rolling lands.



Crystal Craig

The Only One

*What if you're the only one
who will ever love me true?
What if I have let you go
and there is nothing I can do?
Will I sit all by myself
on lonely nights and cry?
And will I wish I still had you
until the day I die?
I'll think about you every night
until I fall asleep
and when I'm very far away
I'll still have you to keep.*

Jessica Willett

THE YEARNING TO
BELONG IS FULFILLED

Rhythmic music flows from
Hoofs, I long to run with
Them, free from worldly things.
The wind carefully combs my

Wispy black mane while my
Muscles work in perfect harmony.

I press forward, heart racing
Nose flaring to keep the crisp
Morning air in my lungs
The steady flow of the river is in

The distance.
The river tells us to slow down

So that we may rest in the peaceful valley,
Cradled between two tall mountains like guardians.

We drink deeply from the river cooling our hearts.
Fresh spring grasses fill my mouth
With the sweet taste of new
Morning dew.

A sigh of relief is heard as a mixed breed
Continues to graze on lush spring

Grass to ease our hunger.
The yearning to belong has been fulfilled
We relax with the sun's warmth
Content smiles on our mixed faces.



“By The Winding Banks of Neshaminy..”

“You provide the inspiration,
we provide the education.”

A popular expression promoting Delaware Valley College
that musters young people to optimize their knowledge.

While students arrive on campus with Mom and Dad,
‘tis a time of anxieties and time to be sad.
Hugs and kisses are plentiful, as freshmen “leave their nest,”
attend college, and venture forth to be their best.

Home sickness typically sets in,
“tout de suit” after classes begin.
A teary-eyed, telephoned mother,
usually soothes the mutual emotional feeling for one another.

Then radios blare with descriptions of college athletic games galore,
‘tis an exciting time to cherish and adore.
Students collectively sing their Alma Mater while the band horns blast,
soon a collegiate allegiance unfolds that will forever last.

Spheres of friendships begin to emerge that dissipate loneliness.
Dissipating loneliness begets well-being and happiness.
When friendships are perceived as a sphere,
the sphere’s center is everywhere, and its circumference is nowhere.

Some classes are fun, some are a bore,
Some are easy and some are a chore.
With their cohort or buddy,
exams are passed when together they study.

Ah, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring and Summer vacations,
On every calendar are these notations.
‘Tis a time to savor family and friends,
a time to envision the apropos of future career trends.

James E. Diamond, PhD.

Background: During the last week of August each year, a new corps of freshmen arrives on the campus of Delaware Valley College. Often accompanying them are Moms, Dads, and sometimes their girl friends, boy friends, siblings, or grandparents or just friends to experience their "leaving the nest." This is a difficult time for parents because they are now seeing a person that was once their little child suddenly grown up to a point where they are leaving home to enter college. This can be a traumatic experience for parents and many tears are shed as suitcases, pictures, computers, televisions, and other items of comfort too numerous to mention are carried from SUVs to dormitory rooms. Parents suddenly realize that reality has set in and their little child is now enrolled in college. After many years of being both a college faculty member and administrator at an institution of higher learning that I love so dearly, the following lines are an attempt to collectively put into perspective the scenarios in general that I have witnessed over the years. The title of this poem is the opening line of the DVC Alma Mater.



Jessica Willett

History

Gigantic books filled to the brim
With what looks to be words made

For him not for her.
Man has made up stories of his

Triumphs. What about the women
Who have done so many
Things in this world?

Back in the day, women were believed
To be as smart as trees.
So women sat and listened

To the stories of men,
Growing tired. I wonder
What would have happened

If women had the run
Of this world

Instead of being second best.

Jessica Willett

**EMPTY PROMISES FLOATING
ON BROKEN DREAMS**

The Great Mother's daughter glides down a grand
spiral stair case floating on broken dreams from empty
promises. Dainty as she may seem,
she lands with her full weight and cracks

each step as if they are assets hidden in nightmares.
Steps moan taking on the pressure like estranged sisters
of her impulsiveness.

She strolls like a child in a park without a burden.

Wearing a tattered milky white dress flowing
behind her, she is carrying her disheveled past.

Her index finger presses against her
scarlet lips. Sssssssssh!

She whispers to the steps.

The steps protest because of the weight she carries
in her heart.

Many steps filled with trepidation, silence their concerns.

One will stay silent and continues to
creak violently under the Great Mother's daughter's bare feet.

When every step, grew weary of moaning,
she stumbled on

the step that moaned like a sister in protest.

Diminishing she hoped to deteriorate under the weight of
her own past filled with
empty promises floating on broken dreams.

I grew up in the ghetto – Queens, NY. Many people hear the words “New York City” and immediately think of the best – Broadway, museums, culture. These people have never seen the real New York. They have never seen how the majority of the people really live. They have never seen where I come from. They have never seen the ghetto.

I, on the other hand, lived and breathed the ghetto from the moment that I was born. It was where I would be raised. It was where I would look out of my window and see fights occurring. It was where I would go outside and sit on my stoop because...well, I couldn't think of anything better to do. It is where I thought I would remain. And I was petrified.

People don't last long in the ghetto – either physically or mentally. I was determined to survive. I was determined to escape. So, I applied myself intensely to my school work. It was my only hope.

Because of my diligence concerning scholastics, I gained admission into the Honors program at Long Island City High School. The Honors program afforded several opportunities that the regular program did not. One of these being a chance to take an opera class taught by the principal of the school.

This sounded like something that I should be doing. I wanted to be “intellectual,” I wanted to become a “well rounded” person. So, I signed up for the class. It was not what I expected.

I thought that I would be immersed in the operatic experience – in another culture. I thought that I would love it from the moment I walked in the classroom. It didn't happen this way. I didn't love Opera. In fact, I couldn't stand it. I had to wake up at 5:30 in the morning to get to the 7 a.m. start of the class. I had to buy CDs and tickets. I had to listen to loud music early in the morning when all I wanted to do was sleep. I hated Opera. And I really, really wanted to drop the course.

But, something told me to hang in there – at least for a few more weeks. So, I did. A few weeks later, I had one of the best and most frightening experiences of my entire life. I saw an opera.

I had never been to the opera house at Lincoln Center. I had never been to Lincoln Center period. I don't think that I had ever been to that part of Manhattan before. It was a new experience. It was scaring, nerve racking,



thrilling. It was amazing.

We had to dress up to go to the opera (which I did reluctantly). We met at the school. Then, we got on a train. And then, we got on another train. Then we walked – past hotels that I had never seen before, past stores that I had never seen before, and past a section of Central Park that I never even knew existed.

Eventually we wound up outside of a white building that seemed huge to me at the time. Outside of the building was a big, black water fountain. The class sat around the fountain as we waited to go in (we arrived a bit early). By this time, I was becoming anxious. What lay beyond those doors, I wondered. I yearned to go in. I yearned to see. I yearned to experience.

After what seemed like an eternity, we went in. I was awe-struck. This was, honestly, the most beautiful place that I had ever seen in my entire life. There were long, carpeted stairs leading up to our seats. As we walked up the stairs, we saw costumes from previous operas on display. The ceilings seemed to go on forever and ever. It was another world.

Our seats were located in the balcony. I walked to my seat and forced myself to sit down. Stop gawking, I told myself. You look stupid. I calmly looked around. I looked down and saw the stage that would show me my very first opera. Suddenly, it hit me. I was at Lincoln Center. And I was about to see a production of an opera that has been hailed worldwide – “Turandot.” There are no words to describe my excitement... or my terror. I was very, very nervous. I didn’t know how to act. Should I be this excited? Here I was in this sophisticated place wearing my sophisticated clothing. It only made sense that I should have a sophisticated attitude to match. But I didn’t know how to act sophisticated. I didn’t even know what it meant.

I looked around and became intensely self-conscious. No one looked as excited as I felt. I felt stupid. I felt naive. It’s just Opera, I told myself. Relax. Grow Up. So, I leaned back, sat in what I deemed to be a sophisticated manner, and waited for the Opera to begin.

An old man with a suit and tie came out and politely requested that everyone turn off their cellular phones and beepers. The lights dimmed. “Turandot” began.

I became immersed in the opera from the moment the curtains opened. I was afraid to take my eyes off of the stage for one second – I was afraid to blink – lest I miss something important or miniscule for that matter. I didn’t care. I didn’t want to miss a thing.

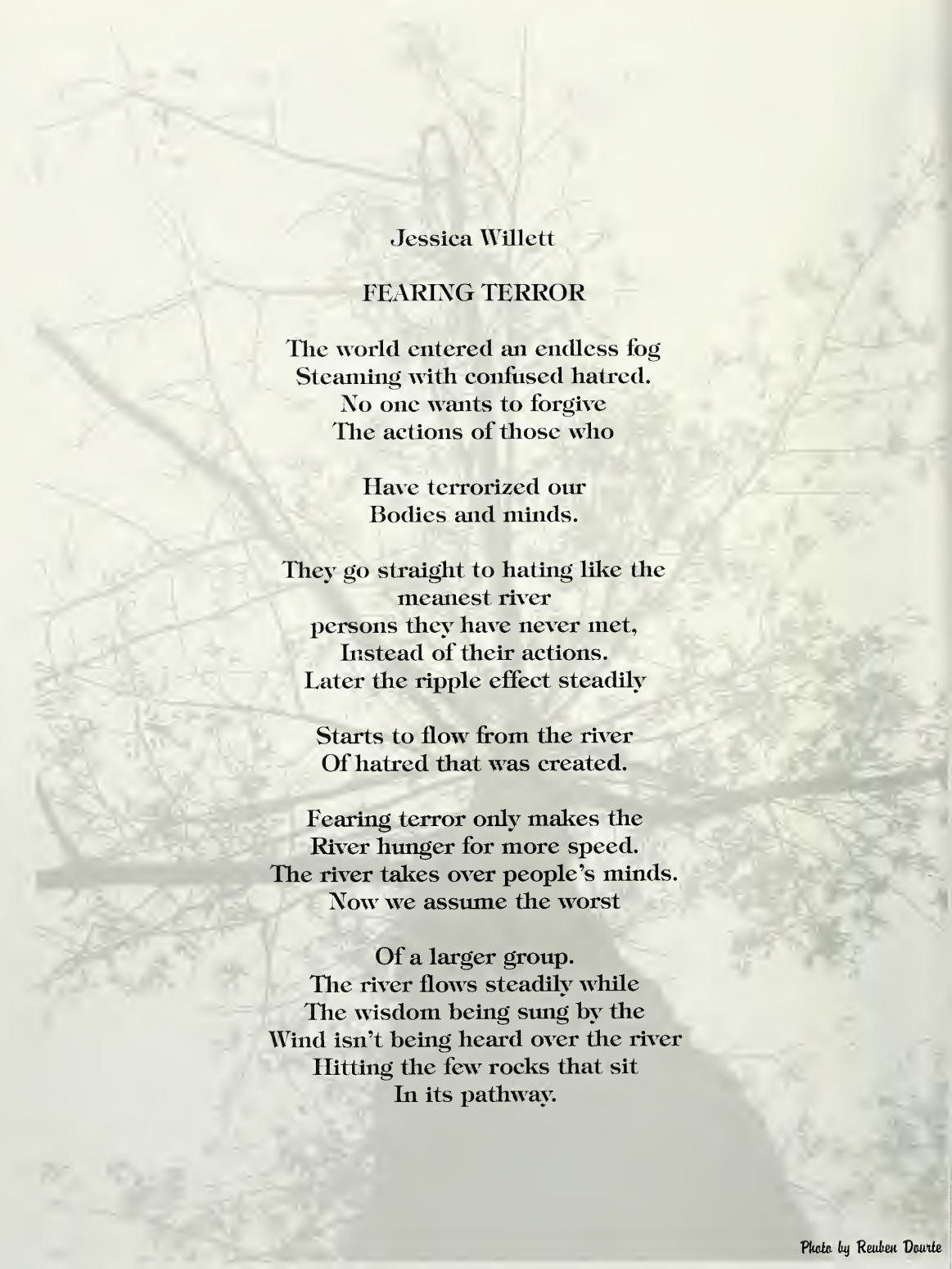
I grew afraid when the lights began to slowly come on. This is not right. The opera is not over. It can’t be over. Then, the polite old man came out and told everyone that it was time for an intermission. Good. An intermission I could deal with. We all filed out into the lobby and I impatiently waited for the second half of the opera to begin.

Eventually, we heard the chimes telling us that intermission was over. We could take our seats. “Turandot” would resume shortly.

The second half of the Opera was even better than the first. It was where everything came to a climax. It was where I almost cried because the music was so beautiful, the emotions so strong. It was overwhelming.

I walked out of the Opera house with a new view on life. I had a new way of looking at myself. I felt stupid. I felt ignorant. There was an entire world out there; there was an entire culture out there that I knew nothing about. I was merely offered a glimpse. And just that glimpse was enough to convince me that this world was much better than the one that I inhabited. This was where I wanted to be.

From that day on, I gave opera class everything that I had. I listened to every opera CD that I could get my hands on. I grew to love opera. I still do. And, I am grateful for the opportunity that was given to me. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow as a person. There are a lot of people who are from where I am from that will never get the same opportunity. Some will get the opportunity, but will fail to seize it, like I almost did. I almost missed becoming a better human being. I’m afraid of the person that I would have become had I not had this experience.



Jessica Willett

FEARING TERROR

The world entered an endless fog
Steaming with confused hatred.
No one wants to forgive
The actions of those who

Have terrorized our
Bodies and minds.

They go straight to hating like the
meanest river
persons they have never met,
Instead of their actions.
Later the ripple effect steadily

Starts to flow from the river
Of hatred that was created.

Fearing terror only makes the
River hunger for more speed.
The river takes over people's minds.
Now we assume the worst

Of a larger group.
The river flows steadily while
The wisdom being sung by the
Wind isn't being heard over the river
Hitting the few rocks that sit
In its pathway.

Til Dreck

Forgetting You

*Sadness, madness, love and all
Why is it these things seem to make me fall?*

*Today is coming to an end
This is my one last turn around life's bend*

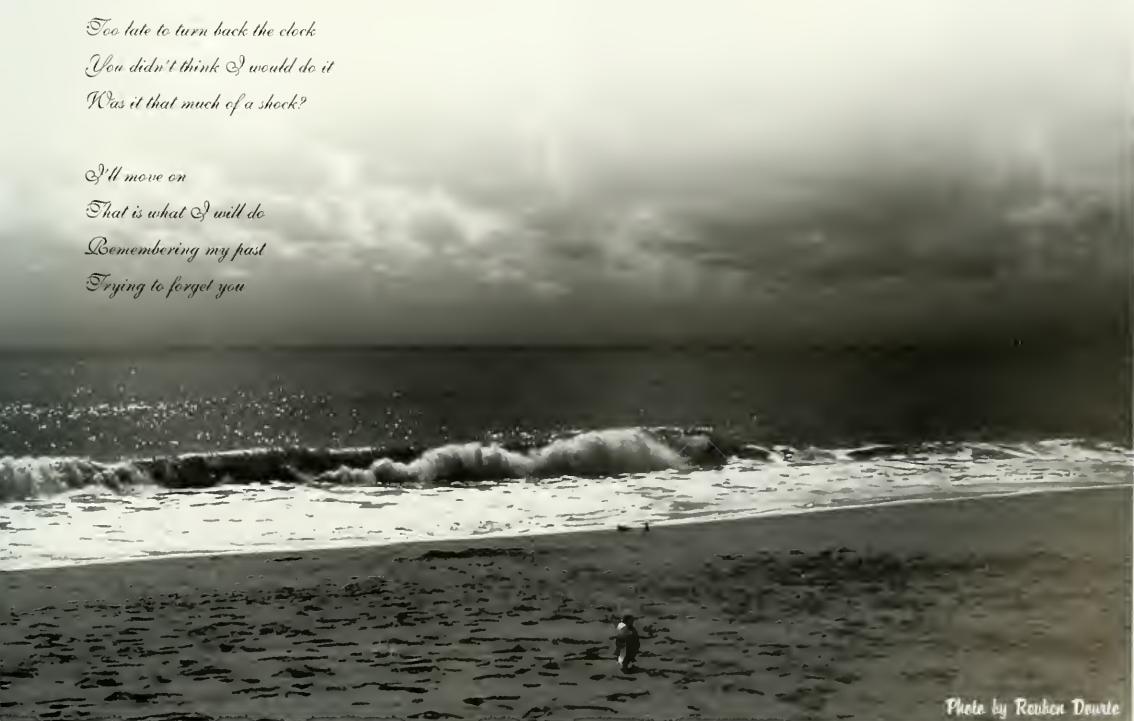
*I'll hold my head up, wait and stare
As my shameful tears fall into the summer's quiet peaceful air*

*Where am I going?
How will I get back?
I have lost my mind
The train has run off its track*

*Bruised and broken
That is where I stand
All I needed was for you to hold my hand*

*Too late to turn back the clock
You didn't think I would do it
Was it that much of a shock?*

*I'll move on
That is what I will do
Remembering my past
Trying to forget you*



That they may see the good that we do

Five minutes before the start of the show Dom finished dressing in his tunic. He had not wanted to take part in it but the students, his fellow colleagues and even his closest friend demanded that he at least have some part. He had in fact not only written the play (with the aid of his wife, a choreographer) but had also written the book on which the play was based and had a hand some years back writing the screenplay-and Dom had been nominated for an Oscar for his work. Thus having a part in the school's performance of the play would be appropriate but it was only at the urging of his wife that he accepted a small part as a piano player on stage right. He would be blocked in several scenes by fighting and by the girl's choir and his music would be drowned out by the orchestra in all of the scenes but the final one.

The curtain call came. Dom bee-lined to the piano. The play opened with a student from Holy Cross who played a monk named Corionar; Corionar was the fictitious author of the play. The part had originally been offered to Dom, who declined, saying, 'I fit it so well that the part would not benefit from me-nor would I benefit from it.' He listened to the boy who handled the part well. Dom knew him from his troop. Dom had been an

Eagle Scout, involved in the Boy Scouts ever since he crossed into Troop 112 from his Cub Scout pack. He earned Eagle at the age of seventeen, a nice respectable age, young enough to still earn at least one palm-but he had never been motivated to earn any palms. He instead became a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and, upon his eighteenth birthday, became an Assistant Scoutmaster. He remained active in Troop 112 throughout his college years and once he graduated from college he became the troop's Scoutmaster. Both of Dom's sons eventually went through Troop 12 as well as Sea Scout Ship 418. Dom's daughter also joined the Ship and Dom himself happened to be the ship's second mate.

The boy, though he had struggled a good deal during practices, now performed well. This play belonged to a series and this was the most difficult one in the series to perform in. The play, named 'In the Name of the Father,' was the third in a series of four plays. Many people who attempted to study the play loved to conjecture about the significance of its name. People loved to say that Marcellus, the main character, sought revenge against his cousin, Servillus the Foul, and Metrin the ogre-lord, for Marcellus held those two entities responsible for the deaths of his son and his grandfather, as well



Photo by Moredith Cole

as the destruction of his kingdom. Dom laughed whenever he thought about it. All people are fools, he always said to himself, and they always fail to recognize their own foolishness.

Fighting ensued quickly after the boy's initial speech; it was a war play but Dom tried valiantly not to make it a war epic. He usually taught one English class every semester-either Creative Writing (Creative Writing cannot be taught!) or Classic Literature (No such thing exists!). No matter what the class he always told his students that war epics are good for histories and little else and that an author has to be talented in order not to degrade the story into a mere string of battle scenes.

Nonetheless, Dom had given in to the compulsion to write battle scenes. He watched them from his perch next to the piano. As the second battle raged, a very important character died-actually two important characters died. The first would be Lamaren, the man who led the fight against Servillus the Foul and Lord Metrin in the Hidden Lands for many years, but who in his later years resigned himself to a small, two acre plot of land in the castle of Alorene, the capital of Meriola. Vespasiano, the Adviser to the King of Meriola, also died; both are casualties in a vicious and hopeless battle in the defense of Alorene. Dom always thought Vespasiano to be a tragic case for he had written the Adviser's part as that of a tragic hero. The cause of Casey's fall is similar to that of King Arthur's-but Arthur's sin was that of the graver sin of incest while Casey's was merely that of impurity. In his English classes Dom loved to use Casey as an example of a sympathetic-and some students liked to joke pathetic-tragic hero in his classes.

Dom only taught three classes at Our Lady of Lourdes and English was one of them. The other two were biology classes and all three classes were always scheduled for the morning. In the afternoon he conducted his duties as Director of Production in the grounds department of Friella's, a local amusement park. His job demanded him to work both inside the park-there was a conservatory inside the park which required his attention and many of the flower beds were used for propagation. The park also had five acres of fruit trees and two acres of berries. Outside of the park there were several production greenhouses which grew things year round, as well as a cider press and cannery equipment and a machinery building, cold storage and facilities for making jams, pies and butters, and five acres of fruit trees, and two acres of berries on the park's property. Dom also managed thirty-five acres of tree fruit and berry production which was off the park's property and split between Our Lady of Lourdes, and Dom's alma mater-Holy Cross, which was where the boy went.

Dom had mixed much into his writings in general and this play in particular-war, violence, love, passion. It was a very depressed play as was the whole series and the end was bittersweet. Dom had intended it that way. He had often thought of Karl Orff's words in his opera *Carmina Burana*, 'O Fortune, like the moon you are changeable, ever waxing, ever waning.' He certainly stayed faithful to those words throughout his plays and paid them special tribute in this work.

The author played the piano through 'In the Name of the Father,' drowned out by the orchestra, physically blocked by a choir, but at the very end of the play the two choirs descended the stage and dispersed themselves into the audience for the final number. In the final scene Marcellus, the Lord of Boriocalum-who is the High King of Terena-kneels on stage with his face in his hands mourning the horrendous losses of the war fought against his cousin. His adviser, Francesco, an elderly man who also is the grandfather of Vespasiano, stood next to the High King, comforting him. In the center aisle of the crowd stood one of the monks, Gerionar, who happened to be the abbot of the local monastery and gifted with second sight. A young monk, Corionar, the character whose part the boy who opened the play performed, asked Gerionar what he saw. Gerionar replied by saying,

'I see the Lord and High King, weeping for his kingdom.' In the meantime the girl's choir sang Karl Orff's 'O Fortuna' while the boy's choir sang, 'The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor.' Dom's solo came here and he played the entirety of the last scene. The last words of the play were not quite words at all but the quiet yet eerie singing of the boy's choir, 'The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.' As these last words were sung Dom felt very sad for he felt a part of himself feel sorry for his fictitious High King. Some people would later claim that they actually saw Dom cry at this point in the night.

The play thus ended, and the entire audience erupted into a standing ovation. It was a spectacular performance. All of the actors and actresses went forward and took their applause which became a roar when the boy who had played Marcellus came out. Then something strange happened-Dom took the stage. It was the last night of the play and on the last night of high school plays usually the lead character or president of the drama society says a few words, but now Dom took stage center. He said,

'Thank you for coming to the last performance of "In the name of the Father." Due to the popularity of "In the Name of the Father,"-- Our Lady of Lourdes has had sold out shows every weekend for four weekends-- an encore performance of "Promised Land," the sequel to "In the Name of the Father," has been scheduled for next year. I have already been asked to play the part of Francesco Anglini, but I have declined as many have expected me to do. I will be unable to have any part in it whatsoever, aside from writing the script. Five days ago I was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. I have already informed Sister Superior that I will not be returning next semester to the school. I have certainly had a wonderful time here.' As Dom went to step down from the stage the audience was in perfect shock. If the president of Holy Cross had not walked down the aisle and motioned for Dom to remain where he was, then Dom would have left the stage and that would be that. But the president of Holy Cross, a singular Fr. Anthony Terione, did not intend for that to happen. Fr. Anthony took the stage and said,

'Domenic is a very quiet man. He quietly stepped into our lives so long ago that we forget when or how it happened. None here remember Dom's days at Holy Cross, or when he began working in Friella's grounds department or when he first was a member of Troop 112. What we do remember is how Dom led hundreds of boys, including my brother and myself, through Troop 112. We remember how Dom served in the order of the Arrow as our Chapter Adviser and on our Ship as second mate. We remember picking peaches and apples and pears in the orchards of Our Lady of Lourdes, Holy Cross and Friella's. We remember well how Nottingham prospered when Dom was our mayor. So it is now that his wife, Julianna, presents to him our humble thanks.' At that Julianna came up to the stage-she was very pretty even in her advanced age. She displayed a plaque for everyone to see as she handed it to her husband.

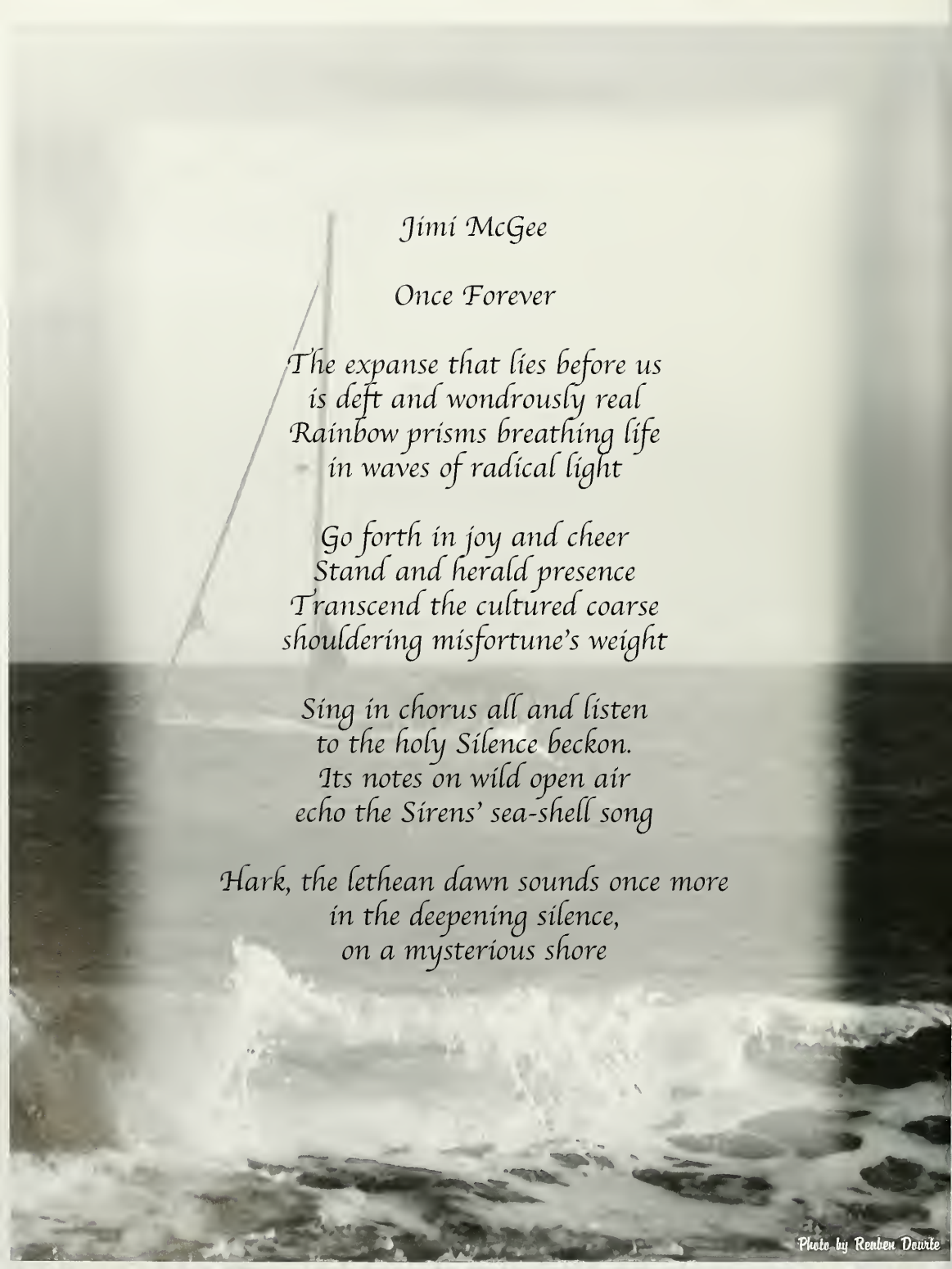
'This plaque,' said Fr. Anthony, 'Will go on the property of Holy Cross. A copy will be placed on the property of Our Lady of Lourdes, another copy in the Central Park of Nottingham and a final copy at Friella's. The inscription reads, "Here lies Domenic, who lives in all that grows." The four properties will be turned into an Arboretum in memory of Dom.' Dom cried and embraced his wife and Fr. Anthony. Though with every second that passed, cancer destroyed his brain and came ever closer to killing him, Dom could never recall being any more happy or alive at any other point in his life.

Jil Derck

Eyes of Love

*One moment locked in time
Beneath all odds, his love still remains true
Whispers in the dark
Sweet kisses in the morn'
So overwhelmed by his love
She has fallen
Now completely indulged in his gentle touch
The fear which she once had, now vanished
Simplicity takes over
Her every sense is focused upon him
The woman who was once so afraid to give her tender heart
Is not lost in the eyes of love*





Jimi McGee

Once Forever

*The expanse that lies before us
is deft and wondrously real
Rainbow prisms breathing life
in waves of radical light*

*Go forth in joy and cheer
Stand and herald presence
Transcend the cultured coarse
shouldering misfortune's weight*

*Sing in chorus all and listen
to the holy Silence beckon.
Its notes on wild open air
echo the Sirens' sea-shell song*

*Hark, the lethean dawn sounds once more
in the deepening silence,
on a mysterious shore*



Photo by C. Ockadlick

Jimi McGee

Our Last Conversation

*The part that holds on
even when it hurts.
The part that dreams
knowing it's not true.
The whispers in softness
I never quite hear.*

*Is it weak to be so strong?
To never have for what you long.
To speak what's felt from heart that's true.
To rise each day and watch it go.
To reach in night, someone to know.*

*Bending knee with power and might
I ask these things to take from sight.
But they come and are always near.
Love hiding,
in the wet of tear.*

Timi McGee

*Metanoi
The Silent Treatment*

(1)

*There will come a time
when you tire of the running.
When what you're running towards
becomes the running away.
When all of your grasping
leaves you with clenched fists.
Pride's mighty servants
defiance and cloistered bliss.
When all feels so empty and
you finally fall silent.*

(2)

*I might be old or vanished
when love like death awakens.
But don't be mistaken
thinking I'm not there.
It's just that I've changed
and live in quiet air:
So when everything changes
and you become new and aware,
feel the silence that you gave me,
I'm that first breath of air.*

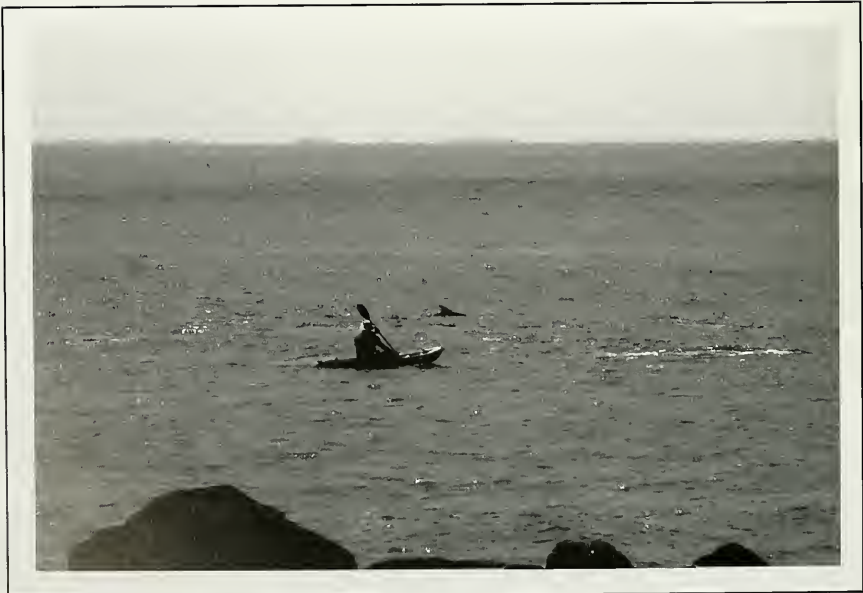


Photo by Reuben Dourte

Lee Pouliot

Flickering Flame

Sitting outside on a starry night
Watching a candle's flickering light
Feeling the chill run through the air
Crickets are singing – hidden somewhere

All of a sudden I look toward the sky
Where stars are flickering – some
shooting by
Where trees in envy attempt to reach
Where He resides or so they preach

The flame grows still as time passes
Then with tiny vigor – it becomes
enchanted
Changing shape with each passing
soul
Desperately following with a trail of
smoke

Into the night's sky so silently deep
This trail leads to the final majestic
keep
Where angels sing and dance away
And love is eternal – forever to stay

152
Eyes Closed

Midnight

I'm there again in that place
Literally lost in time and space
Staring past a lightless sky
Where not even eagles have power
to fly...

Where swirls of sand float just like
clouds
While candles burn with piercing
sounds...

And here I am locked in this place
Running carelessly, covering my
face
For what I see surrounding me,
Reflects my feelings - deep as the
sea...

I'm too weak to get away
They grab me like claws, making me
stay
One by one they prod my soul
Until at last I pay the final toll...

They throw me now, back to time
Where I realize my life's without
rhyme...

For I'm living life lacking love...
Giving birth to nightmares above...



Photo by Renée Menauus

Lee Pouliot

Summer's End

Through myst and valley meek
Past mountains holding mysteries deep.
There lived an enchantress, kind and true
Who planted the forests about which she flew.

She knew once again that the days lived less,
And thus it was time for her long yearly rest.
So off once again, she danced from the ground
Passing on dreams to tree, shrub, and sprout!

Soon green would no longer cover the land
As a colorful finale would arise like wind and sand.
"Sweet dreams to you my wonderful creations...
May spring come about in haste
For then, once again my green glory takes place!"

And then she closed her eyes so fair
While Old Man Winter's chill crept into the air.
But in nature one could find no shiver,
Their dreams were of summer by the rivers

By now, the greens have become so faint,
While yellow, orange, and red are laid on like paint.
And soon all will become so barren
As autumn retreats to a white winter apparent.

Meghan Figueiredo

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

I've learned that chickens and rotties don't mix.

I've learned that I will never become a better rider if I stay in my comfort zone.

That every horse pulls something out of the same bag of tricks, we only need to know what trick and when.

I've learned that if you mix booze and mineral oil then give it to a colicking horse, not only will you knock the shit out of him but you may also give him a hangover the next morning.

I've learned that mares also PMS; and when they do to give them all the sweet feed they want no questions asked

I've learned that you should never gallop faster than your guardian angel can fly; if that's true then my guardian angel can fly about 40 mph and wears a jet pack

I have also learned that people and horses must at some point leave; whether it's to a new home, job, for good reasons and bad, maybe even to the big pasture in the sky but at some point everyone must go.

Now it is my turn, I must now leave the safety of the familiar surrounding and friends to embark on a new chapter in my life. I am scared, I won't lie about that, but it is that fear which drives me to continue learning.

I hope that I will never be forgotten and will always have a place here.

*I only hope that I have done all of my duties and leave behind good memories until once again I can return to a place that I call home. A place where tough but goodhearted people live for the sounds and love of horses
A place called Crosswinds Appaloosas.*



Photo by Annemarie Rissi



Photo by Renée Monnaus

Michelle Neumann

WINTER'S LOVE

Every breath steams in the winter chill
The wind nips at us
Threatening to numb us to the core
It plays with the fire
Making it crackle and spark
We huddle a little bit closer
Attempting to fight Old Man Winter's death

Let the fire ignite us both
Awaken us from winter slumber
Warmed by flame's dying amber rays
The glare of the white sheet
Frosts us into hibernation
Feeling slowly ebbing
My love, I fear, is dying

Let our passion burn us into oblivion
Energies explode into blissful ecstasy
Dare to feel what is inside
Do not let the ice freeze our hearts
We shall not give in to wintry complacency
Excitement slowly rises
My love, I know, is growing

The frost no longer bites
As we melt the snow with our warmth
Bleak winter is shadowed
By the force of our conviction
The battle over the Old is won
As we huddled a little bit closer
The warmth of Maiden Spring kissed our hearts

Michelle Neumann
The Play Known as Life

[End Scene]

A new is to begin
So what of the scene to follow?
Am I the playwright of life?
To weave our threads together
As the Fates have done so

I cannot write your life
Nor can I really depict my own
Knowing the past scenes and acts
Allows me to surmise and anticipate
These words scrawl themselves into my script
And yours

Many scripts interweave
And flow into one great manuscript
The characters influence one another
Protagonists, Antagonists, Narrators
No understudies to step in
If the lead might fail

For we lead our own lives
We write our own parts
In the grand scheme of things
Only to influence one another
In the many-stranded web of a play
Entitled: LIFE

Michelle Neumann

Forgotten Soldier

He drifts silently between the stones
The folds of an ebony cloak whisper over
grass and granite
A thick mist looms in the predawn light
Once again, the Watchman makes
his rounds

Days of virgin light crest a mossy knoll
Golden strands expose the dead man's
resting place
They reveal the slab of a forgotten soldier
Who lies amongst overgrown shrubbery

None but a few faded indentations grace the
surface
The name has long been forgotten
Time, winds, and disappearing memory erode
his existence
Corpse below and memory above decay into
oblivion

Night watchman stands before the slab
The Keeper remembers every soul
Knowing the man only in death
The soldier's memory is all but lost

Remembrance of a time long forgotten
Days of battle and bloodshed
When mere boys were thrust into the
grown man's world
Enduring pains of body and mind

Hooded Keeper travels through the past,
present and future
He knows the fallen man's plight
Night watchman sees the degradation
of memory
He alone is the keeper of it



Photo by Reuben Dewale

R.B.

Frame of Winter

Silent, motionless, it hangs there
Like a frame,
Filled with scenic phrases,
And olden leaves watching
While their siblings find the floor.
The chilling, almost bitter, air starts opening,
Giving birth to a snow-laden show,
Now finding first life, creating pictures
Again inside this frame,
Born anew and ever-changing with the days.

R.B.

The Waiting Water

*My feet have, from walking hard,
Given up and fallen off.
Not literally, of course.
They join my hands above.*

*Wrapped around, are found my boots,
Worn thin, less usable.
Treading on the glowing embers,
Of fires indiscernible.*

*Gorged, my body, filled to the line,
The sea-level of maximum.
Excess rain bears flooding water,
Land swiftly overcome.*

*Like the storm, the work builds force,
Not quick, but over time.
To set a pace would rain a mist,
More bearable a crime.*

*The dam constructed, water stagnant,
Allowed to sit and wait,
Until the final drop created,
And down unleashes fate.*

*To blame is the drop, the rain,
The field of flooded clover.
No thought to that of wasted time,
That runs the water over.*



Photo by Annemarie Rissi

Rebecca Spille

A National Experience

Stepping off the stairs onto the red claylike footing of the paddock area, I looked around for my horse, Turk. Finding Turk, I mounted and adjusted my stirrups. They seemed a bit long to me but Cory and Joanne kept telling me that they would be better that way in case he was bouncy so that I wouldn't bounce around too much. Turk's handler chimed in saying that he tended to get goofy during the walk/trot and walk/trot/canter equitation. Oh how wonderful, I thought, my first big competition, one that I had spent two weeks preparing for, and I'm going to be riding a goofball.

After walking around and getting used to Turk, I felt relaxed and confident that I would have a good ride because he was behaving very well (this might not be so bad; at least he's not acting like a goofball). It wasn't long before they called my class into the ring. Checking my posture and pushing my heels down, I wrapped my fingers around the crop Cory handed me as I entered the ring. I started out with a nice walk and posting trot. I was feeling pretty good about my ride at this point. Then the judges asked for a sitting trot. I slowed Turk down a bit and sat back in the saddle to a very bouncy trot. I immediately lost one stirrup and had to stop myself from grabbing the saddle (oh crap). Feeling the other stirrup slip off my foot, I thought, double crap. I was now bouncing side to side in the saddle very close to bouncing clean off, I must look like a rag doll bouncing around on this horse, I thought, as I did my best to stay in the saddle. My team mates in the stands were probably recording my ride on Joanne's camera (oh how silly I must look). I could picture the red claylike footing rushing up to meet me and I gripped with my legs to keep from coming off, all the while thinking, I don't think I want to meet the footing today; must stay in saddle. It seemed like I was fighting a losing battle as I fought to stay mounted.

Trying to slow Turk down and regain my stirrups, which were banging against my feet, I somehow see Joanne mouth, "Drop the crop." It took a moment for me to figure out what she was trying to tell me because I was bouncing so much. Dropping the crop that I even forgot I had in my hand, I thought, maybe he'll slow down now. It seemed like the second the crop hit the ground the judges asked everyone to walk. Responding to the announcer, Turk slowed to a walk. Relieved and a little frustrated, I found my stirrups and regained my posture. That was fun, let's do it again, I thought as I finished my ride. Well, I'm not pinning today but I'll get to see how silly I looked when I watch the recording later.

Renée McManus

"Time Has Slipped Away"

Time...

We do not realize how precious it is,
Until it has slipped away from us.

If only we had another second,
To smile at someone,
Another minute,
To laugh, or joke, or give a hug.
To say, "I love you,"
Or even just a couple more minutes,
To talk or spend time together,
Then I would feel a lot better.

For there was one day that my dad went to visit Nanny.
He asked if I would like to go.
(She was very sick with Alzheimer's)
But of course I said that I did not have the time,
So he went alone.

A couple of weeks later, she passed away...

She left us all.
Her time on earth had suddenly slipped away.

There were so many things that I wanted to say.
I wanted to tell her that I was alright.
I made it to college just like her son and was almost finished.
I am sorry that I did not make time to visit her when she
needed us the most.
I would be there for my dad when she was gone.
But, most importantly, deep down inside,
I did love her and care for her
Even though I did not see her that much

From this I have seen life in a different light.
You must always do what you want to do
today,
Because there might not be a tomorrow.

Take the time to share your feelings with
others,
And to say what is on your mind.

Visit family and friends whenever you
get the chance.
If you do not, you might have
regrets like me,
And time might pass you by, too.

(Note: I would like to dedicate
this to my grandmother who
died on May 18, 2004)

Michelle Neumann

Illusion

Fake

All this is, is fake

An illusion

*My figment, me I am but a piece of
perception*

The eye of the beholder

With no vision to see

The great thinker

With no creativity

Mirage in the abysmal oasis

Parched desert cracks my heart

Rain of pleasure has not fallen


Wilting from insatiable thirst

Turning black as the sun scorches

Ashen to the core

A heart among the death roses

In the oasis of imagen



-Kathleen Weaver

On the Other Side

I didn't exist
For a moment today
For when we passed
You looked away
Not acknowledging my needs
Or even my existence
But in the pain
I realized
How many times
I've avoided eyes that were
Reaching out to me

Maria Grabowski

His Running

*Alone in the morning
the sunrise providing the light
and the garbage men producing the soundtrack
aware of no watcher
his bare legs gleaming
air brushing his face
concrete paving his way
he sets out on foot for an hour of solitude
before the rest of the world awakes
ready to start other day.*





Photo by Renée McManus

Lee Pouliot

A Moment's Miracle

Snowflakes have fallen upon your fair face
Each landing with such perfect grace
Your eyes glisten as they – from the light nearby
As your warm breath dances up towards the sky.

We've been out here for a while,
And the snow has started to pile
Red and rosy your cheeks have become
While I wonder just where you came from.

The stars I've counted – over one, two and three
Even over candles I've wished for you to be
And now I'm holding you within my embrace
With you there's nothing I can't face.

So on and on our white wonder goes
As we walk through mysterious, wondrous glow
And upon looking up towards a glimmering sky
Our souls magically meet eye to eye.

So as we close the door on our wintry retreat
They begin to dance from their feet
For they've known since winter's first day
That our love is forever here to stay!



*The Dalarna Horse,
National Sweden of Sweden
-Dr Karen Sebramm*



*"Styling in Wisconsin"
-Dr. Karen Sebramm*



Michelle Neumann

The Kiss (A Hopeless Romantic Poem)

Staring into those beautiful eyes
The fire within them ignites
Desire burns
Fingertips caress my tingling skin
I am set ablaze
Complete me

Push aside errant strands of hair
Hold my head in your hands
Bring me closer to you
Slow motion

Penetrating gaze never breaks
Only to close as the gap does
Supple lips graze one another
Hesitation

Intake of trembling breath
Submission has never been so sweet
Hearts race, pumping at an increasing rate
All thought ceases but one
I can't get enough of this

Desirous hunger fuels us
Pulsing and pushing
We breathe as one
We move as one
We feel as one

-Kathleen Weaver

My Sons Back

*I cherished every moment I had with him
When he was that small
I knew he was bound to grow up
To be strong independent and tall
I always watched him fall asleep
Leaning on his bedroom door
Bill would tap me on the shoulder and say,
"What are you standing there for?"*

*My hand and fingers covered his entire back
He felt comfort in my every move
I knew one day, that my mother's touch
Would do no good to sooth*

*I should stay here one more moment
I said to Bill with a sigh
He's going to grow up so quickly
I feel bad every time I blink an eye*

*Surely enough the years passed by
Hour after hour
And Bill still finds me standing there
Leaning like a watch tower
My hand no longer fits his back
Nor do I believe he wants it to
It takes me six hands to fit across
My baby grew up, there is nothing I can do*

*I still will cherish every moment
Leaning on his bedroom door
And even though my hand is now small
It might still have the same effect as before
So if he ever needs a guiding hand
Mine will give the touch of care
And if he ever need to find me
I'll be leaning on his bedroom door,
Waiting there*



Nena Cizewski-Smith

*Like the leaves that rush,
Spinning across the ground,
Caught in an updraft.
Like the endless patter
Of a spring rain on the roof
Soothing the spirit, reviving the soul.
These are my thoughts of you.*

*Like the sweet smell of spring
Which signals the end of winter
Drifting through the open windows.
Like the warm sand, soft
Under my care-worn feet.
Like gentle music playing,
These are my thoughts of you.*

*Liked the distant echo
Of a memory
Long remembered,
Forever loved,
Touching the deepest part of my soul
I didn't ask for this.
It is joy beyond compare.*

Nena Cizewski-Smith

What

Can start a revolution? Can wake up
Old ways of thinking, can make them new?
Can you, can we, ever hope to reach the limit?

If

Thoughts can affect water, how far
Can our thought affect us, affect each other?
And what is the effect desired, when we think?

Why

Not test the limits? Test the ideas
Roaming around inside your possibilities?
Why not peek over the precipice of potentials?

We

Are not small, are not insignificant.
Are only at the beginning of our infinities - -
So, how far, how far down the rabbit hole?
Do you wish to go?



Renée McManus

CLOUD NINE

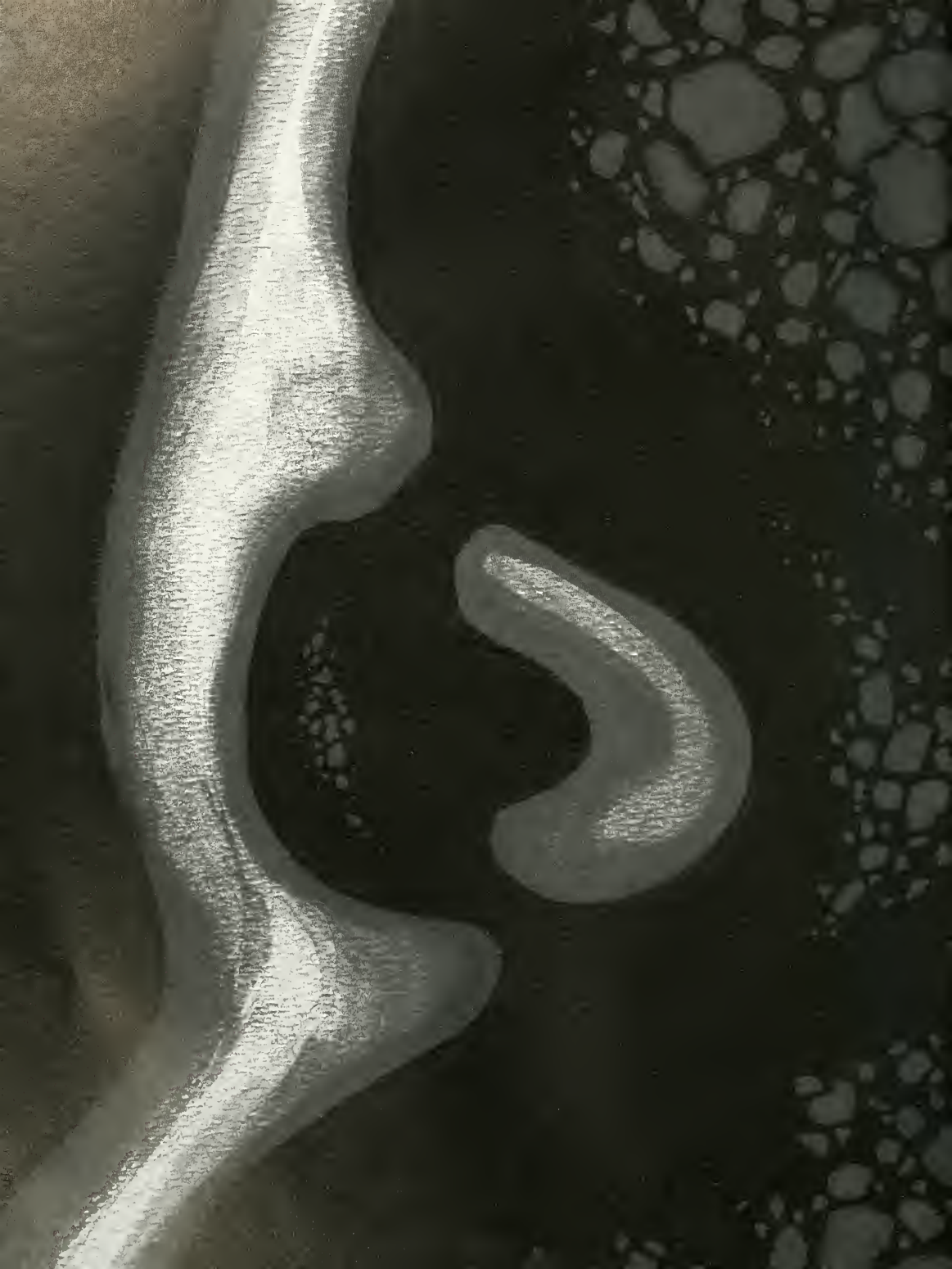
An imaginary place that is far from “home”...
Where all of your worries are down below and far
behind you...

A place that is a bazillion miles away...
It is where all of your hopes and dreams have come
true.

The place is Cloud Nine.
You will be able to stay up there,
Until someone or something “smacks” you back down
to reality and the “real world.”



Photo by Reuben Dourte



Kathleen O'Leary

Each year as a person
I learn something new
However this summer alone
What I've seen cannot be true

I've often wondered in the past
What I was sent here for
Was it to seemingly exist
Or change what was here before

In people I've seen too much
At least for me in the past weeks
Madness, drunkenness, disgrace
Which is more than my young mind needs

However in these clouded moments
In these thousands of eyes I did see
Hope, promise, something undiscovered
I often wonder were all these moments meant for me

I saw the drunken father
The cheating wife
The underage teenager
Throwing away his or her life

After all of this
I've come to these simple conclusions
That I am here to help people
Even if it is simply to clarify their confusions

Tabitha Davison

Look

Look at yourself

What you dish out will come back to you tenfold

That man you belittled

That woman you disrespected

That boy you made feel weak

That girl you insulted

Look at yourself

Your soul bares the scars of your wretchedness





Photo by Aureliane Rissi

Tabitha Davison

Home

When will I be home
Home in your arms for all time
Time not fleeting, but for our lives and beyond
You're just a hope, a dream, a prayer
Yet I feel you in every fiber of my being
A haunting presence in everything I do
I search for you in every face, every glance, every fleeting smile
Do you search for me?
Every night I weep
Every morning I wake Hoping, praying
This will be the day
The day I find home
Home in your arms for all time

Tabitha Davison

Hopeful Anguish

**Cool damp sand
Gentle lapping waves
Everything has a purple hue
I sit unmoving
Listening to the ocean breeze
As it whispers words of comfort
A tear escapes my eye
Betraying my cool exterior
It is caressed away
I shudder & tremble with the inner turmoil
As I fight to keep the emotions from taking over
It envelopes me in a cool embrace
I can't do this
I can't hold back any longer
I give up
I scream out all my frustration, anger and despair
It takes it all in & carries it into the changing horizon
Hues of purple now pinks, yellows and blues
A new day
A new beginning**

Michelle Neumann

Nightly Reflections

Rose-colored disc slowly slips beyond the horizon
Gliding through satin clouds
Radiating amber blends into the night
Bed of blood curved fluff
Reflects upon the day

Fiery disc soon bids farewell
Taking the memories with it
To shine afresh with the dawn
Memories of the past night
Wink on with each star

New diamond brilliance
Pain upon the surface
Midnight universe blazes with sadness
The horned moon does not shade from the past
Cold blue white light washes the land

Reflections upon glass droplets
Dripping from frozen azure eyes
Crickets chirp a mournful tune
In time with a broken heart
Night waltzes into the morn

Rose-colored disc slowly creeps above the horizon



Photo by Annemarie Rissi



Photo by Reuben Downte

R.B.

The Wooden Mountain

The wake of the day
Found him staring past the door.
The orange glow now brightening,
Like it always had before.

These day to day consistencies
He'd envied as they came.
Never was his life sedentary.
Two things never were the same.

Gained and lost before has he,
But this time, they were gone for good.
To end it all would end it all,
And this he'd understood.

Gone was his job, his money,
He'd even lost his wife,
And so he'd lost his dignity,
Thus ergo went his life.

He thought, "If my feelings, these things that feel,
Can feel these very things,
Why do they leave me fearing life,
Fearing the life it brings?"

And then in his frustration
Threw his hands up in the air,
Climbed that wooden mountain,
Then out from under kicked the chair.

But how vile, though tragic,
Here this story doesn't end.
Plant it deep. Watch it grow.
Pass it on with you, my friend.

Tell of how loss and strain have ravished
Through a cold, now empty soul,
Can push a man to his limits,
And on him take its toll.



MEMORY OF THE HUNTED

GAZING SOMEWHAT AIMLESSLY,
ALL THINGS INCONSEQUENTIAL.
ALMOST CARELESS, ALBEIT, A BIT ALERT,
WITH NOT A THOUGHT ESSENTIAL.

JOURNEY HALTED, SOUNDS AWAKEN
SENSES FORMERLY SUBDUED.
EYES DARTING ROUND THE VACANT WOOD
FOR PREDATOR OF PAIN ENSUED.

A PIERCING BLOW OF VITAL SORT,
MAKES WAY TO SEE THE LIGHT.
KEY TO INTERNAL DESTRUCTION,
SOON ENTAILS A FINAL FIGHT.

NOW GASPING, FLEETING, REACHING
FOR A BREATH UNTOUCHABLE.
LIFE FLOWING LIKE A RIVER,
FROM A WOUND UNBEARABLE.

SELF-PRESERVATION LINGERS,
AS THE GAIT TO WALKING TURNS.
HEAD SWAYING, VISION BLURRED,
OF LYING DOWN, THE QUESTION BURNS.

GIVING IN TO TIRED BODY,
CRASHING DOWN, A LEAF INDENTED.
ADRENALINE, THE FINAL HOPE,
AWAKENING A BODY VENTED.

FEELING HEAVY, EYES SUCCUMB,
SOON THE BODY FOLLOWS SUIT.
DEATH SEEMINGLY THE OPTION
TO A BLOOD IMPACTED ROUTE.

LIMP, THE BODY HELD IN HANDS,
DROPS OF BLOOD JOIN JOYFUL TEARS.
AT THE MEET, CLINKING GLASSES
FILLED WITH CELEBRATION BEERS.

AND SO JOY CAN RISE FROM MISERY,
LONG AS IT COMES FROM OTHER'S PAIN.
BACK AT THE SCENE, THE BLOODY TRAIL,
WASHED AWAY WITH WINTER'S REIGN.



Photo by Karen Schuman

77-88 senior stories
Past Sleep

There's an hour that passes
during soft, skin-thin nights
when I grow into a stalk,
tender with humid dark.
My hair becomes
brown-green rivulets of plants.
My eyes are not seen in the night
(like once-lustrous pennies
loving the cling of solitary soil).
All my limbs become
gauzy husks,
my tongue - a leaf of lolling drivel.

So tender,
the open dark
breathes its cajoling breath
through the pipes of night,
of me.
If I let myself be lulled,
I miss the settling of hush,
the soft alighting in this
great lung of wide-openness.

I try to stay up until
the last hours of dark wilt
from a full bloom.
By then, my tiny insides become
shallow ponds of lukewarm water,
touching only the ankles of consciousness.

1st Prize Poetry Lexi A. Bell
Abington Senior High School
Mrs. Albert Saylor

Cycle-For My Mother

"I used to know the moon,"
She told me, crying,
The blue of her sweater glowing in the fading light of the after-
noon
"I knew the tides, the eternal rhythm"

From across the marble counter top
I watch, from a distance of too many years and too little experi-
ence,
And feel my own stomach cramp with the capability of life
While she recalls the morning she woke
To find the world had changed
And time had fled
Sooner than it should have
To leave her,
Abandoned,
With the whisper of what could no longer be
And the lingering memory of blood
And in the warmth of that same kitchen
I knead life into dough
And bake good, sweet things
As if I could make up for her body's omission

And in the liquid light of the den
I am drawn to write
as if I could take on her sleepless exhaustion

And every month
My womb turns with the earth, the moon, the tides,
As if I could be her redemption

But
I am not my Mother

Years ago
She gave me her body, her blood
And now,
When she needs it the most,
I cannot give her mine
And while she mourns her loss
I mourn my impotence
as I can only watch
as her mid-month peace, her only warmth in this long winter,
dissipates with the fleeting rays of the evening's setting sun
and she envisions herself disappearing over the horizon
with the years that she cannot retrieve

2nd Prize Poetry Julia Coff
Germantown Academy
Teachers: Peter Drewniansky

Sticks and Stones

*This is a battle of strength and wits
and we are the infantry.
Line us up in rows and columns that fit.
A change of heart, we just want to get free.
One by one by one by one.
Words and letters loaded into these guns.
Engineered to impact,
penetrate
lacerate
[against everything we hate].*

*Moments before the decision to fight;
a shotgun pulse, white knuckles clenched tight.
One last breath to catch precedes the damage to be done.
Who will raise the white flag,
under the red sun?*

*As the general points and screams;
bones are shattered, like their dreams.
It was, in an instant, an Armageddon.
And with every battle arises a lesson.
Because we all know what bullets can do,
but the truth is;
words can kill too.*

*3rd Prize Poetry John DiPasquale
Council Rock High School - North
Mrs. Hall*

Student of the Game
(in the style of Aurora Morales)

I am a student of the game,
a hard-hitting warrior of the gridiron,
a hunter hungry for victory, driven to dominate and seize glory.

I am a running back,
a smooth mix of speed, power, and agility.
A workhorse who relies on the strength of himself, as well as his
teammates.
I cut with fury; it's the only way I've ever known,
a shot through my opposition's heart, as I break a long run.

I am a linebacker. Nasty personifies me best,
evokes during my tackles, rings through my opposition's ears;
intimidation proves to be the sharpest arrow in my quiver,
yet success relies on more than trash-talking.
I am the vocal leader of the defense, the one who everyone looks
to.
Not only do I embrace the weight, but thrive on it.

I am not a bully. I push people around, but my coach rewards me
for it.
I am not a baseball player. They hit hard, but no one brings the
heat like I do.
I am not a game-day player. I come to play, but my games are won
in the off-season.

I am determined. Greatness drives me. My work ethic will win
games.
I will get my glory.

3rd Prize Poetry

Scott Britton
Council Rock North High School
Ms. Stewart

*Dedicatory Application Ode
(With apologies to Catullus)*

*To whom do I give this finished little-work,
All proof-read and corrected?
Oh, University, to you,
And I wish that you may judge
My trifles to be something
When I, a mere student, have dared
To recount my four years in a few little-pages
Learned, I hope, and laborious.
Wherefore take to yourself whatever this is of a little-work,
O Muse of college acceptances,
May this ode remain more everlasting than an age.*

<i>3rd Prize Poetry</i>	<i>Kathryn Anthony</i>
	<i>The American Academy</i>
	<i>Dr. Sharon Traver</i>

Mesopotamian Gift

*As spiders roll down a dune
Curled in a curious way
Creating a simple display
Worthy of mimicking soon*

*As trees flow forth from earth
Growing in radial style
Shrouded with globular guile
Insuring plentiful birth*

*As a potter spinning clay
Angrily tips his device
Summoning images like these
Sees the first wheel roll away*

3rd Prize Poetry

*Steven Heilman
North Penn High School
Mrs. Staley*

The Cooking Lesson

It is my first cooking lesson, and my mother is teaching me how to cook rice. "Take the pot and put in two cups of rice. Add water to clean it a little."

I had cited the practical benefits of being able to prepare real Chinese food. But in truth, "practicality" barely scratches the surface of why I need to learn how to cook. I cannot easily explain the other reasons to my mother. I lack the Chinese and she lacks the English; this sense of tongue-tied helplessness is familiar to us both. My mother can ask me a question as simple as, "What did you do in school today?" and I find myself unable to answer meaningfully with the few thousand words where our vocabularies overlap. In our disagreements, we can never argue fairly; no matter which language we use, one of us is compromised. Over time, I stopped arguing back. I would let my mother have her say and quietly reserve the right to agree or disagree for myself, wanting to eliminate fruitless confrontations.

There was more peace between us, but I bought it at the price of understanding. The reticence spread beyond the realm of our disputes. It was easy and gradual and created no awkwardness, like a cancer that develops without pain. I realized that I had to penetrate the layers of silence. Food is the only area in which I know more Chinese than English, so I have started by asking for cooking lessons.

I pour out the cloudy water after the cleaning of the rice is finished. My mother gives me instructions to lay my palm flat against the rice and run water into the pot until my knuckles are submerged. I look at my hand with a slight twinge of shame, what I always feel when I note the absence of calluses, which is so unlike my mother's hands.

Her calluses speak silently to me of her sacrifices. I think of her decision to relinquish career, friends, and extended family to stay in the U.S. My mother's sacrifices often lead her to act with an air of self-righteousness, another reason why I had trouble arguing back in our disagreements. She would automatically stand herself on a higher plane by virtue of all she had done for my sake.

As I enjoy the blessings that were denied to her generation and her mother's generation, the overwhelming feeling I have is one of uneasy gratitude. I wonder if my mother has a degree of possession over my dreams because of what she has given up to make them possible. She has told me that she does not expect me to care for her in the Confucian way when she is old. But although she proudly

says that she has adapted to the "American" way of thinking and that she simply wants me to be happy, I know it is not enough to achieve success for myself. I must figure out my own way to give to her, just as I must figure out my own way to speak to her. I will give and receive, speak and listen, cook and eat.

I place the lid over the electric rice pot and flip the switch. The first lesson is over. I have only begun to discover how much there is to learn.

1st Prize Prose

Yunxue Xu

Wissahickon High School

Mrs. Barbara Speece

Having a mind for language, I have never been able to truly appreciate the entire significance of math. I can lovingly pronounce all the harmonious letters of the alphabet, but even my most gifted math teachers cannot recite all of their discordant numbers. Furthermore, if they have such an endless bounty of numbers at their disposal, why must they greedily reach into my prized letters? Understanding my inclinations, you can imagine my surprise when I discovered my new best friend in math class. We are even on a first name basis. I just call him Pi. He is a Greek symbol representing a never-ending number. Pi is a mouth-watering temptation to my blooming mathematical mind. It comes in so many varieties: apple, cherry, chocolate. More importantly, there are the reasons we love and need Pi so very much: circumference, diameter, area, sine, cosine and the list keeps going.

Pi and I are the perfect example of "opposites attract." I am the fluttering butterfly of flowing analysis while he is the uptight drill sergeant of exactness. I might nonchalantly inform Pi that he is simply "about 3" and he would fire back "No, I am 3.14159265..." My immediate reaction to a number carried out to a decimal place to which no mathematician has a name was frustration. Mathematicians call this "infinity" and have a sideways number eight to represent this abstract idea, but I couldn't see the purpose of a decimal place in the billionth column and beyond. I would find it more appropriate to go ahead and cut Pi's decimals off after about thirty.

Upon further reflection, however, I began to see a possible validation in Pi's perfectionism. Take the elegant and simple nursery rhyme "Sing a Song of Sixpence." The third and fourth lines, "Four and twenty blackbirds/ Baked in a pie," cause my literary head to assume an underlying symbolism about birds and pastry. To a mathematician (who certainly would have said "twenty-four black birds" thereby destroying the beautiful rhythm of the poem), this seemingly innocent children's story is a frustrating math problem. To the mathematician, the question is proposed, "how did the baker know how big to make the circumference of the pie in order to fit twenty-four birds inside?" This is an extremely important question considering the consequences of getting the circumference wrong. What if only three and twenty blackbirds were able to fit in the pie? Moreover, what if it happened that twenty-three and a half birds fit in the pie, or perhaps just a wing, which is what led to the maid getting her nose snapped off as set forth

in the lines "There came a little blackbird/ And snapped off [the maid's] nose." If I were that bird whose wing was in the pie, I would peck at the maid's nose too.

My mathematical super-hero friend, Pi, solved this essential problem. He set out in his precise way of 3.14159265... and joined forces with his pal, Diameter. Together they conquered Circumference and guaranteed the space for the baker's twenty-four birds! More important is the issue of the area of the pie. Would there be a mass pile of blackbird on top of blackbird, or would an evenly spaced out approach be more efficient? Once again, duty called, and Pi set out with his colleague Radius to find the optimal arrangement of the blackbird pie most fitting to be served to the King.

As my infatuation with Pi continued, I began to wonder, am I truly enamored with Pi and his exact methodical approach towards the meaning of life? I felt a certain comfort with the flowery world of language and was not sure if I was ready to join forces with these precise fellows who are so limited to the applications in which they are exact. In time, I began to realize that there is room for Pi (and Diameter, Radius, Circumference, and Area) in my world. Now, instead of looking at the sun as a mere luminous, potent, sizzling, yellow orb that holds the power to breathe life onto the earth, I can also see it as a magnificent r^2 .

2nd Prize Prose

Danielle Sunberg
Council Rock High School North
Mrs. Lamberth



Photo by Kathleen Weaver

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